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GOVERNOR BARBOUR ANNOUNCES EXECUTIVE STAFF CHANGES

(JACKSON, Mississippi) – Governor Haley Barbour today announced executive staff changes in the Office of the Governor and the Department of Public Safety.

The Governor said he has accepted the resignation of George Phillips, who has served as Commissioner of Public Safety since May 2005; Charlie Williams, the Governor's chief of staff for the past four years, will replace Phillips as commissioner. In addition, Governor Barbour announced that Paul Hurst, his chief counsel for the past four years, will become chief of staff, replacing Williams.

The changes are effective immediately.

"George Phillips has been an exceptional public servant, including many years as U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Mississippi. He did an outstanding job and achieved superior results at the Mississippi Bureau of Narcotics in the first year and a half of my administration. When Katrina struck, shortly after he was elevated to Commissioner of Public Safety, the Highway Patrol and state law enforcement set a high standard that will stand as a model for other states in dealing with large natural disasters. I appreciate his positive contributions to strengthening law enforcement in Mississippi," Governor Barbour said.

"I am very grateful to Charlie Williams for his friendship, leadership and guidance, especially during his service as my chief of staff since I took office in 2004; but the fact is Charlie and I have been friends for more than 40 years. His appointment as Commissioner of Public Safety underscores the importance I attach to this department's vital mission and the dedicated people who work to keep Mississippians safe," Governor Barbour said.

"Paul's legal counsel and judgment have been invaluable during my first term, and I am very pleased he has accepted this new leadership role in the Office of the Governor. I know he will perform these new responsibilities with the same diligence and high degree of professionalism that mark his service," Governor Barbour said.

Hurst, 39, is a Jackson resident who earned a bachelor of arts degree from Vanderbilt University in 1991 and graduated from the University of Mississippi School of Law in 1995.

Prior to joining the Governor's staff as chief counsel at the beginning of the administration in January 2004, Hurst worked as an attorney at the Jackson law firms of Butler, Snow, O'Mara, Stevens and Cannada (1999-2004); and McCoy, Wilkins,

Stephens and Tipton (1996-1999). From 1995-1996, he was Judicial Clerk to the Honorable L.T. Senter, Jr., Chief Judge, United States District Court for the Northern District of Mississippi.

Hurst and his wife, Fair, who holds a Ph.D. in math and formerly was a professor at Belhaven College, have been married for 15 years; they are the parents of three daughters. They are active members of First Presbyterian Church in Jackson, where Paul teaches Sunday School.

Williams, a life-long resident of Senatobia and graduate of the University of Mississippi, has served as Governor Barbour's chief of staff since January 2004. Williams served in the Mississippi House of Representatives for 24 years, chairing the Ways and Means Committee for eight years. He also served as chairman of the 16-state Southern Legislative Conference in 1992-93. In 1998 he was National Chairman of the Council of State Governments, an organization representing elected and appointed public officials in the United States.

Charlie is married to Ellen Williams, a registered nurse and nursing instructor at Northwest Mississippi Community College, as well as a Ph.D. candidate in nursing at University Medical Center; they have two sons.

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